

Service for Ash Wednesday 2 March 2022: The Beginning of Lent

The Gathering of God's People

SENTENCE OF SCRIPTURE

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart you will not despise.

Psalm 51: 17

Lord, have mercy.

INTRODUCTION

Brothers and sisters in Christ: since the early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection. It became the custom of the Church to prepare for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

At first this season of Lent was observed by those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and by those who were to be restored to the Church's fellowship from which they had been separated through sin. In course of time the Church came to recognize that, by a careful keeping of these days, all Christians might take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Lord to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

THE COLLECT

Silence is kept

Let us pray for grace to keep Lent faithfully.

Almighty and everlasting God
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent.
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we may be truly sorry for our sins
and obtain from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

THE PSALM

Psalm 51: 1-8

Refrain: ***Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned against you.***

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; ♦
according to the abundance of your compassion
blot out my offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness ♦

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults ♦

and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned ♦

and done what is evil in your sight,
So that you are justified in your sentence ♦
and righteous in your judgement.
I have been wicked even from my birth, ♦
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
Behold, you desire truth deep within me ♦
and shall make me understand wisdom
in the depths of my heart.
Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; ♦
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned against you.

THE GOSPEL

St. Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

‘Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

‘So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

‘And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

‘And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

ADDRESS

The Liturgy of Penitence

Let us now call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God.

THE COMMANDMENTS

Hear these commandments which God has given to his people, and take them to heart:

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD: YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BUT ME.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF ANY IDOL.
God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:24

YOU SHALL NOT DISHONOUR THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.
You shall worship him with reverence and awe. Heb. 12:28

REMEMBER THE LORD'S DAY, AND KEEP IT HOLY.
Christ is risen from the dead: set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. Col. 3:1,2

Lord, have mercy on us, and write these your laws in our hearts.

HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.
Live as servants of God, honour all people, love your brothers and sisters in Christ.
1 Peter 2:16

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER.
Be reconciled to your brother and sister: overcome evil with good. Matt. 5:24, Rom. 13:21

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.
Know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 6:19

YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.
Be honest in all that you do and care for those in need. Eph. 4:28

YOU SHALL NOT BE A FALSE WITNESS.
Let everyone speak the truth. Eph. 4:25

YOU SHALL NOT COVET ANYTHING WHICH BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR.
Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: It is more blessed to give than to receive. Love your neighbour as yourself, for love is the fulfilling of the law. Acts 20:35, Rom. 13:9,10

Lord, have mercy on us, and write all these your laws in our hearts.

THE LITANY

God the Father, creator of heaven and earth,
have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit, giver of life,
have mercy on us.
Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three Persons in one God,
have mercy on us.

Save us, good Lord, from all sin and wickedness, from pride, hypocrisy
and conceit, from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness,
save us, good Lord.

From sins of thought, word and deed, from the lusts of the flesh, from
the deceits of the world and the snares of the devil,
save us, good Lord.

From fire, storm and flood, from disease, pestilence and want, from war
and murder, and from dying unprepared,
save us, good Lord.

From all false doctrine, from hardness of heart, from contempt of your
word and commandment, and from the evil of schism.
save us, good Lord.

In times of sorrow and in times of joy, in the hour of death, and in the
day of judgement,
save us, good Lord.

Saviour of the world, forgive our sins, known and unknown, things done,
and left undone; grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit that we may
amend our lives according to your holy word, and share with all your people
the joys of your eternal kingdom.

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, Redeemer of the world,
give us your peace.

Silence is kept

Make our hearts clean, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded your love, and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness to walk as children of light. Amen.

God our Father,
the strength of all who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers;
and because, in our weakness,
we can do nothing good without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in keeping your commandments
we may please you, both in will and deed;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Gracious God and Father,
you have given your Son for us all,
that his death might be our life
and his affliction our peace.

We pray for THE SUFFERING
the hungry ...
the refugees ...
the prisoners ...
the persecuted ...
all who bring sin and suffering to others ...
all who seek to bring care and relief ...

In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us to trust your love,
to serve your purpose
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord our God,
grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;
that so desiring, we may seek and find you;
and so finding, may love you;
and so loving, may hate those sins
from which you have delivered us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.